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SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS: MASS
EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

Report of the Representative of the Secretary General,
Mr. Francis M. Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission
resolution 1998/50

Addendum

Note by the secretariat

1. The secretariat of the Commission on Human Rights has the honour to transmit to the Commission the report of the Workshop on Internal Displacement in Africa, organized by the Brookings Institution (Washington, D.C.), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and held in Addis Ababa on 19 and 20 October 1998, as an addendum to the report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, Mr. Francis Deng.

2. The report of the workshop is preceded by an introduction by Mr. Deng.

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ANNEX

Report of the Workshop on Internal Displacement in Africa
(Addis Ababa, 19-20 October 1998)

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Introduction

I am pleased to present this report on the Brookings Institution-UNHCR-OAU Workshop on Internal Displacement in Africa, which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 19-20 October 1998.

The workshop brought together a rich cross-section of participants from international agencies, regional organizations, NGOs and research institutions. It produced a better understanding of the problems confronting internally displaced persons on the ground, as well as the strategies needed at the national, regional and international levels to help address their plight. More specifically, the workshop facilitated a valuable discussion on the dissemination and promotion of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which I presented to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April 1998 (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2).

The report of the workshop contains many recommendations that should prove of value to Governments and organizations working with the internally displaced. These recommendations should also help to guide the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons, to be held in Khartoum in December 1998.

It is my hope that the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement will be disseminated throughout Africa and applied as widely as possible. It is also my hope that regional and subregional organizations in the continent will continue to increase their involvement with internally displaced populations, and that such efforts will lead to a reduction in the scale and severity of internal displacement in Africa. Finally, I believe that the Addis Ababa workshop has established a valuable model for the promotion of the Guiding Principles, and hope that similar events will soon take place in other regions of the world.

I. THE WORKSHOP

1. The workshop was jointly convened by the Brookings Institution (Washington, D.C.), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The primary purpose of the workshop was to focus attention on the problem of internal displacement in Africa and to identify ways of improving the response to that problem at the national, regional and international levels. More specifically, the workshop was intended:

To promote the dissemination and application of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement throughout the African continent;

To explore the role of Africa's regional and subregional organizations in addressing the problem of internal displacement; and

To formulate concrete conclusions and recommendations in relation to the issue of internal displacement, for submission to the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons, to be held in Khartoum in December 1998.

2. The 55 participants in the workshop, coming from a variety of African countries as well as Europe and North America, represented a broad cross-section of international organizations, regional and subregional bodies, non-governmental organizations and research institutions. While sharing a common concern for the internally displaced, the participants brought distinct and different perspectives to the meeting, reflecting the nature of their involvement and experience with the issue of internal displacement. In particular, the selection of workshop participants allowed a valuable interaction to take place between policymakers and practitioners.

3. This report, which sets out the main conclusions and recommendations of the workshop, was prepared by the rapporteur, Jeff Crisp (UNHCR) and co-rapporteur, Erin Mooney (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights). The structure of the report generally reflects the workshop agenda, although additional sections have been inserted in the report to cover issues which emerged in the course of the discussion.

II. INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA

4. The workshop noted with great concern the scale and severity of the problem of internal displacement in Africa. While there is a global crisis of internal displacement, Africa is by far the most seriously affected continent. There are currently between 8 and 10 million internally displaced persons in Africa, around half of the worldwide total. Up to 21 States in the continent now have significant populations of internally displaced persons. Unfortunately, the workshop noted, the scale of internal displacement is growing in some parts of Africa, while the situation of the internally displaced is deteriorating.

5. A large proportion of the internally displaced persons in Africa suffer from acute hardship and insecurity. The internally displaced are most usually to be found in countries which are characterized by armed conflict, social

violence, lawlessness and human rights violations. As a result, the physical and legal protection offered to internally displaced persons often falls short of internationally accepted standards. Some of the continent's internally displaced persons have been subjected to multiple and forcible relocation by States and non-State actors, obliging them to live a life of perpetual movement and insecurity.

6. The living conditions experienced by the internally displaced persons of Africa are also unacceptable. Access to basic needs such as food, clean water, shelter, health care and education is rarely adequate. Women and children, who tend to be disproportionately represented in internally displaced populations, experience multiple deprivations and dangers in their daily lives.

7. The response to situations of internal displacement in Africa has often been slow or non-existent. Few African States have the means or operational capacity to launch large-scale relief operations or to maintain the rule of law in areas populated by large numbers of internally displaced persons. And humanitarian organizations often find a discrepancy in the level of resources available to assist internally displaced persons compared with those available for refugees.

8. In some situations, humanitarian organizations have been denied access to internally displaced populations, either as a result of fighting and insecurity or as a result of deliberate obstruction by States and non-State actors. In addition, relief programmes for the internally displaced have on occasions been suspended because they are thought to be intensifying or prolonging the armed conflict that originally provoked the displacement. As a result, the burden of protecting and assisting the internally displaced has too often fallen on local communities and displaced persons themselves.

9. In recent years, the world's major powers have been progressively disengaging from areas of the world that are not perceived to be of strategic or economic interest to them. With respect to issues such as conflict prevention, conflict resolution and emergency response, the international community is placing greater expectations on the States of Africa, as well as the continent's regional and subregional organizations. And yet the capacity of these institutions to assume responsibility for such tasks continues to be seriously constrained by economic and political difficulties.

10. Regrettably, States and other actors in Africa have not always demonstrated a willingness to address the situation of the internally displaced in a concerted or humane manner. Indeed, a distinct lack of solidarity with the internally displaced has been witnessed in several African countries. In some cases, population displacements appear to have been deliberately provoked by States and other actors for the purpose of political, military, economic or electoral gain. And once displaced, the affected populations have too often been treated as enemies and subjected to further punishment, rather than as fellow citizens who are in need of protection, assistance and a solution to their plight.

III. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

11. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement represent the first international standards specific to internally displaced persons and their particular needs. Presented to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April 1998, they were developed by a team of international legal experts working under the direction of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons. The Principles articulate the meaning of protection for internally displaced persons by setting out the rights of such populations and by identifying the obligations of States and other authorities in the different phases of displacement: before displacement (that is, protection against arbitrary displacement), during displacement and in the phase of return and reintegration. Although not a legally binding document, the Principles reflect and are consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law (which are binding) and refugee law by analogy.

12. The workshop noted with pleasure that the Guiding Principles have quickly begun to gain authority and international standing. The United Nations Secretary-General, in his report to the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council, has highlighted the Principles as a notable achievement. The Commission on Human Rights has taken note of the Principles and of the stated intention of the Representative to use them in his work.

13. The United Nations's Inter-Agency Standing Committee, comprised of the heads of the major international relief and development agencies and NGO groupings, has welcomed the Guiding Principles and encouraged its members to share them with their executive boards and staff and to apply them in their activities. As a result, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and other humanitarian organizations, as well as the Representative of the Secretary-General and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), have begun to disseminate the Principles, to familiarize their staff with their provisions and to use them as a benchmark against which to monitor the treatment of the internally displaced.

14. The workshop warmly welcomed and endorsed the Guiding Principles, recognizing that they provide an important basis on which to address the problem of internal displacement in Africa. The strong protection focus of the Principles and their comprehensive approach, incorporating the issues of prevention, protection, assistance and solutions, were particularly welcomed by participants. The workshop also underscored the importance of the linkage which the Guiding Principles make between finding solutions to current situations of internal displacement and the prevention of future displacements.

15. In recognition of the fact that they are based on existing human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law by analogy, the workshop affirmed that the Guiding Principles do not seek to create a privileged category of persons or to establish a separate legal status for the internally displaced. Rather, the Principles are based on the assumption that internally displaced persons have the same rights and obligations as other persons living in their own State. At the same time, however, the Guiding Principles draw

attention to the importance of realizing those rights in a way that addresses the particular situation and needs of the internally displaced.

16. In its discussion of this topic, the workshop recognized that the Guiding Principles can be put to a variety of different uses:

Raising awareness of the rights of the internally displaced and of the responsibilities of the authorities in respecting those rights;

Engaging in advocacy efforts on behalf of the internally displaced and those at risk of displacement;

Initiating a dialogue with the authorities on the issue of internal displacement;

Interceding with the authorities in order to address specific situations or problems involving internally displaced persons;

Providing a checklist of issues which can be employed in the process of needs assessment and programme development;

Establishing benchmarks which can be used to monitor the treatment of internally displaced persons and to hold the authorities responsible for their actions;

Providing a reference for use in the drafting of legislation pertaining to the issues of human rights and internal displacement; and

Empowering internally displaced communities by providing them with information concerning their rights and the responsibilities of the authorities who govern them.

17. By broad consensus, the workshop agreed that the main priority is now for the Guiding Principles to be effectively disseminated and operationalized. At the same time, participants noted the utility of the Principles in their respective operational activities and underscored the need for concerted efforts to ensure that the Principles are adhered to by States and other actors.

IV. DISSEMINATION AND PROMOTION OF THE PRINCIPLES

18. The workshop recognized that vigorous and systematic efforts are required to ensure that the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are made available and explained to appropriate institutions and individuals throughout Africa. In order to achieve the effective dissemination and promotion of the Guiding Principles, a concerted plan of action is required, consisting of the following elements:

The widespread distribution of the Guiding Principles by United Nations agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, human rights, relief and development agencies and the institutions of civil society;

The translation of the Guiding Principles into appropriate languages and their reproduction in local journals, magazines and newspapers;

The establishment of public information and public awareness campaigns on the issue of internal displacement at national and local levels;

The incorporation of the Guiding Principles into governmental and non-governmental staff training programmes, as well as training activities involving police forces, armies, national and local administrators;

The incorporation of the Guiding Principles and other documents on the issue of internal displacement in appropriate school, college and university courses and teaching materials; and

The use of innovative methods of dissemination and promotion, including radio programmes, dance and drama activities, in order to inform internally displaced persons and local populations of the Guiding Principles.

19. The organizations represented at the workshop agreed to support and participate in these activities. They also recognized the need to ensure that the Guiding Principles are not only widely disseminated, but that they are also fully understood and respected by all the individuals and institutions concerned. In this respect, the workshop warmly welcomed the forthcoming publication of a field handbook which will provide practical guidance on the implementation of the Guiding Principles. The training of field staff on the basis of the Guiding Principles was also strongly encouraged.

V. PREVENTION OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

20. In accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the workshop agreed upon the need for strenuous efforts to avert the occurrence of situations which force the people of Africa to become uprooted and displaced. While every effort must be made to provide effective protection and assistance to those people who have become internally displaced, such activities cannot prevent or resolve armed conflicts, human rights abuses and forced population displacements. For those objectives to be achieved, the political, social and economic root causes of internal displacement must be effectively addressed.

21. Examining the challenge of averting internal population displacements, the workshop recognized that prevention is a multifaceted undertaking, involving a range of related tasks: eliminating poverty and promoting sustainable development; ensuring respect for human and minority rights; establishing equitable and democratic forms of government; encouraging the peaceful resolution of disputes; ending social injustice and averting the growth of ethnic or communal antagonisms. Participants in the workshop agreed to act as advocates for these preventive approaches and to take the practical measures necessary for them to be realized throughout the African continent.

22. The prevention of internal displacement, the workshop noted, is both a national and an international obligation. At the national level, the workshop affirmed the need for responsible political leadership in Africa and called

upon the continent's decision-makers to act in a manner that will avert the occurrence of armed conflicts, human rights abuses and forced population displacements.

23. At the international level, the workshop recognized the contribution which external actors could make to the prevention of internal displacement in Africa. The workshop urged the world's wealthier and more powerful States to reconsider their growing isolationism and to become fully engaged in the task of promoting human security and human development in Africa. The workshop also called upon those States to offer full support to the United Nations in its efforts to maintain or restore international peace and security throughout the continent. Participants agreed that the United Nations Secretary-General's recent report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa provides a comprehensive agenda for the prevention of displacement, effectively identifying the initiatives which must be taken at the international, regional, subregional and national levels.

VI. STATE AND NON-STATE RESPONSIBILITY

24. The workshop strongly affirmed that States bear primary responsibility for the prevention of internal displacement, for the provision of effective protection and assistance to internally displaced persons and for the resolution of situations of internal displacement. Examining the issue of State responsibility, the workshop agreed on the need to reconceptualize the traditional notion of sovereignty. Rather than being used as a means of resisting internal or external scrutiny, sovereignty should be perceived in terms of the duty of all States to protect and respect the rights of their citizens and to promote international peace and security.

25. The workshop recognized that a large proportion of the internally displaced persons in Africa are to be found in areas which are beyond the control of national authorities, which are under the control of rebel groups, or which are part of countries where State structures have disintegrated or disappeared altogether. The workshop agreed that those non-State actors which exercise effective control over territory, people and resources have a clear obligation to desist from actions which provoke forced population displacement, to protect those populations which have been displaced and to facilitate the return and reintegration of the internally displaced in their own communities. In this respect, participants in the workshop welcomed the recent efforts which have been made to hold individuals accountable for their actions when they have committed war crimes or crimes against humanity.

26. The workshop urged both States and non-State actors to ensure full respect for the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. In accordance with those principles, the workshop also emphasized the need for humanitarian organizations and other appropriate actors to have rapid and unimpeded access to internally displaced persons on all sides of any conflict. Similarly, the workshop strongly reaffirmed the guiding principle which calls on States and non-State actors to protect those persons engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance, as well as their transport and supplies.

Participants agreed that negotiated access agreements involving States, non-State actors and humanitarian organizations should make explicit reference to the Guiding Principles and that the implementation of those principles should be regularly monitored.

27. Referring to those situations in which forced displacement takes place as a result of military imperatives, participants in the workshop expressed the view that States and non-State actors should desist from such displacements wherever possible, and that such displacements should only take place under carefully controlled conditions. More specifically, it was suggested that the manner in which such displacements are undertaken should be consistent with international standards; that the extent of displacement should be strictly proportionate to the actual military need; that the people affected by such displacements should receive full protection (including the protection of their property) and adequate assistance. In accordance with the Guiding Principles, the workshop also emphasized the need for such displacements to last no longer than actually required and for humanitarian organizations and other appropriate actors to have unimpeded access to the populations concerned.

VII. THE ROLE OF REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

28. As indicated earlier in this report, the workshop recognized that there is a growing expectation within the international community that regional and subregional organizations will assume greater responsibility for tasks such as conflict prevention, conflict resolution and emergency response. Significantly, much of the recent discussion concerning the enhanced role of regional and subregional organizations has focused on the African continent.

29. While acknowledging that regional and subregional organizations in Africa could and should assume a more active role in addressing the problem of internal displacement, the workshop agreed that the operational capacity of those organizations continues to be limited. Issues relating to armed conflict, human rights violations and mass population displacements are also a source of political controversy, and the consensus required for effective action at the regional and subregional levels may not always be possible to achieve.

30. The workshop recognized, welcomed and encouraged the growing role of the OAU in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution and called upon the international community to assist the OAU in these tasks. The workshop also welcomed the OAU's growing interest and involvement in the issue of internal displacement and encouraged the OAU, as well as Africa's subregional organizations, to endorse, disseminate and promote the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

31. The workshop noted with interest the call by the Plan of Action of the OAU Seminar on Enhancing the Participation of Returnees, Refugees and Internally Displaced Women in Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Peace-Building, held in Addis Ababa on 12-15 October 1998, for the Secretary-General of the OAU to encourage States to ensure compliance with the Guiding Principles. At the same time, participants urged the OAU to give consideration to the establishment of a focal point for the internally

displaced, and possibly a dedicated unit, with the capacity to collect data on the issue of internal displacement and to monitor the dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles.

32. The workshop made a number of other recommendations with respect to the role of regional and subregional organizations. First, those organizations should facilitate the work of the Secretary-General's Representative on internally displaced persons by encouraging member States to invite the Representative to their country so that he can appraise and report on situations of internal displacement there.

33. Second, when peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations are launched by regional and subregional organizations in Africa, those operations should include a civilian component, staffed by officials who are familiar with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. At the same time, the workshop observed that such operations should be characterized by improved standards, better training, stricter controls, more effective codes of conduct and higher levels of accountability than has been the case in the past. Close and continuous monitoring by the OAU and the United Nations would provide a valuable means for these objectives to be achieved.

34. Finally, the workshop called for a strengthening of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, and suggested that the Commission should take a more active interest in the issue of internal displacement and in the dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles. Joint field missions involving both the Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the OAU's Commission on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons were recommended as a means of strengthening the involvement of both organizations in the issue of internal displacement and giving greater weight to the protection and human rights dimension of internal displacement.

VIII. ASSISTANCE, PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

35. The workshop recognized that while internally displaced persons require both protection and assistance, their protection needs have received inadequate attention by relief and development agencies. The rights-based approach of the Guiding Principles, which stress the complementary nature of physical security, emergency relief and reintegration assistance, was consequently welcomed.

36. In accordance with the Guiding Principles, the workshop underscored the need for international relief and development programmes to give due regard to the protection needs and human rights of internally displaced persons and to take appropriate measures in this regard. The workshop agreed that relief and development programmes involving internally displaced persons should incorporate a protection or human rights component and that all humanitarian and development workers should have a thorough knowledge of human rights and humanitarian principles, including the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

37. The workshop noted that all United Nations agencies have a duty to promote fundamental rights and freedoms under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations. Such agencies also have a responsibility to ensure that their

presence and programmes do not contribute to human rights abuses. States and other authorities should respect this responsibility and desist from any activity intended to manipulate or to derive political and military advantage from the operations of international and humanitarian organizations. To avert such eventualities, the workshop identified a number of safeguards that relief and development agencies should introduce to prevent their manipulation by political actors. These include:

Establishing written agreements with the authorities on the modalities of operation;

Undertaking regular monitoring and data collection on programme implementation and its human rights impact;

Arranging effective staff training in human rights and protection principles;

Maintaining close links with the local population and local NGOs in areas of internal displacement; and

Supporting local legal aid groups so as to ensure that the perpetrators of abuses are held accountable for their actions.

38. The workshop underscored the need for greater cooperation, both at headquarters and in the field, among human rights bodies and humanitarian and development agencies. Several participants expressed the view that relief and development agencies have a responsibility to speak out or, at the very minimum, to pass on information to appropriate bodies when they are witness to human rights abuses which are creating or affecting internally displaced persons. In this connection, attention was drawn to the specific protection mandates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), OHCHR, UNHCR and regional human rights bodies. The unique protection role of ICRC in conflict situations was underlined by several participants. The workshop also underscored the need for OHCHR to be strengthened, both at headquarters and in the field.

39. There was broad consensus that all human rights field operations in situations of internal displacement should, as a matter of course, have a focal point for internally displaced persons who are familiar with the Guiding Principles and who would collaborate with and communicate concerns to the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons. The workshop further recommended that States be encouraged, where appropriate, to allow a human rights field presence in situations of internal displacement on their territory.

IX. LOCAL CAPACITIES AND DISPLACED COMMUNITIES

40. The workshop recognized the need to enhance the role and capacity of local structures in preventing and responding to situations of internal displacement. In addition, the workshop emphasized the need for local NGOs and civil society institutions to receive the full protection of the State and other authorities when working in such situations. Regrettably, participants observed, such organizations continue to be harassed, intimidated and

obstructed in a number of African States. In relation to this issue, the workshop strongly reaffirmed the guiding principle which states that humanitarian organizations have the right to offer their services to the internally displaced, as well as the principle which states that such offers should not be regarded by the authorities as unfriendly acts.

41. In order to ensure the effective dissemination and promotion of the Guiding Principles, participants agreed that international humanitarian organizations and national NGOs should facilitate the organization of local-level workshops on the issue of internal displacement in general and on the application of the Guiding Principles in particular. Internally displaced persons themselves should also be encouraged to attend such workshops and to develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the Guiding Principles. In this respect, the workshop reaffirmed that internally displaced people do not constitute a special category and that they have the same obligations as other citizens.

42. The workshop recognized that internally displaced communities are not passive; they can and should be involved in the decisions which affect their lives. Examining this issue, participants observed that the programmes established by international humanitarian agencies rarely give sufficient attention to the participation and empowerment of displaced communities. Such agencies should therefore re-examine their operational practices and give greater attention to the following tasks:

Ensuring that women play a central role in the design and management of assistance programmes;

Promoting self-sufficiency amongst internally displaced communities, especially by enabling those communities to engage in agricultural production and other income-generating activities;

Encouraging the development of self-help organizations in areas populated by internally displaced populations;

Making education and training available to internally displaced persons, employing where possible those displaced persons who have themselves received an education or training in practical skills;

Encouraging internally displaced persons to identify their needs, to articulate their aspirations and to assert their human rights; and

Involving local populations in programmes established for the internally displaced, both during the period of displacement and at the point when the displaced population returns to its place of origin.

43. In making these recommendations, the workshop recognized that it is not always easy to promote the speedy participation and empowerment of internally displaced persons, especially in emergencies. In many situations, the internally displaced are traumatized, their social structures are fragmented and they may have a low level of education. The workshop also acknowledged that participatory approaches may inadvertently strengthen the position of groups and individuals who are already in a dominant social or economic

position and who may have been responsible for violence, intimidation or exploitation. Participatory programmes and mechanisms should evidently be designed in a manner that prevents such individuals and groups of people from consolidating their dominance.

X. DISPLACED CHILDREN AND WOMEN

44. The workshop warmly welcomed the special attention given to children and women in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Participants took particular note of the fact that these issues have both been mainstreamed in the Guiding Principles and have been made the subject of specific provisions.

45. The majority of Africa's internally displaced persons are children, and the workshop regretted that in many situations, they are the victims of forced recruitment, exploitative labour and sexual abuse. In addressing such human rights violations, the workshop noted the complementarity that exists between the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been widely ratified in Africa. Participants observed that the Convention is a holistic document: all of the rights specified in the Convention have the same priority and are applicable to all children, including those who are internally displaced.

46. Focusing on the situation of internally displaced children, the workshop agreed that particular attention should be given to a number of specific issues. The first is the problem of separation and family reunification. In some emergency situations, it was noted, weak State structures and a proliferation of uncoordinated humanitarian agencies, combined with a shortage of trained and experienced agency staff, have actually exacerbated the problem of separation and made family reunification more difficult. These problems must be addressed and greater emphasis placed on reuniting children with their families and on supporting them within the community.

47. Second, in addition to physical protection and material assistance, internally displaced children are often traumatized and require psycho-social support. Humanitarian agencies should endeavour to provide such services more systematically and to implement them in a manner that brings real comfort and strength to the children concerned. Regrettably, it was observed, some of the psycho-social programmes established in the past had separated children from the community and had been designed in such a way that they actually increased the level of trauma and anxiety experienced by the intended beneficiaries.

48. Third, the workshop recognized that all child-related activities should be undertaken in association with local institutions and in the context of the wider community. Participants pointed out that local institutions often continue to function, even if the State is weak or has disappeared completely. Similarly, when whole communities become internally displaced at the same time, existing social structures may remain intact and provide a basis for the provision of protection, assistance and psycho-social support to internally displaced children.

49. Turning to the issue of gender, the workshop noted that women are affected in a particularly adverse manner by armed conflict and internal displacement. Displacement typically increases the proportion of

female-headed households in a population. Male members of the community may have been killed or moved elsewhere, obliging women to assume sole responsibility for the care of children, the sick and elderly, as well as meeting the material needs of their household. And they must assume such responsibilities in crisis situations where established coping mechanisms and survival strategies have been seriously undermined.

50. In addition to routine discrimination on the basis of their gender, internally displaced women are particularly vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse, and to sexual exploitation by corrupt officials, especially in the delivery of assistance. In many situations, such acts lead to the stigmatization of the women concerned and even their exclusion from the community. Strenuous steps must be taken by the appropriate authorities to prevent such abuses from taking place and to prosecute the perpetrators.

51. The workshop recognized that internally displaced women frequently demonstrate a high degree of resourcefulness in situations of extreme adversity. Efforts on behalf of the internally displaced should always endeavour to build upon this resourcefulness, to ensure that the particular needs of women are met and that their rights are fully respected. The workshop also noted that many of the lessons learned and guidelines developed in the context of refugee protection and assistance programmes could usefully be transferred to the planning and implementation of activities on behalf of the internally displaced.

52. More specifically, the workshop called upon governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure that women are accorded a prominent role in the planning and implementation of assistance programmes; that they are properly represented on any committees established to articulate the views of the internally displaced; and that the establishment of women's groups and associations is effectively supported. At the same time, the workshop recommended that greater use be made of inter-agency missions comprised of women and focusing on the specific needs of women when monitoring the situation of the internally displaced and when planning protection or assistance activities for such populations.

53. Concluding its examination of this issue, the workshop made two additional observations. First, participants emphasized the need to encourage progressive social and cultural changes in crisis situations. When internally displaced women are able to return to their place of origin, they should not also return to a society which is characterized by discriminatory and exploitative social relations. Second, the workshop recognized that women have a special role to play in the areas of conflict resolution and peace-building, and urged all organizations involved with the internally displaced to ensure that the contribution of women to these important processes be maximized.

XI. INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

54. The workshop emphasized the need for effective cooperation and coordination between all of the different agencies involved in situations of internal displacement. While some participants believed that a single international agency - in particular UNHCR - should assume general responsibility for the welfare of the internally displaced, it was recognized

that the problem of internal displacement is too large and complex to be addressed by any one organization. Moreover, both donor States and countries with significant populations of internally displaced people have expressed their reservations about the establishment or designation of a single agency for the internally displaced.

55. At the same time, the workshop recognized that there continued to be a need for strong coordination, both at headquarters and at the field level, in order to improve international responses to the problem of internal displacement. In this respect, the workshop welcomed the appointment of a special adviser on internal displacement in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), believing that this appointment could help to address the institutional gaps and duplications which often exist in situations of internal displacement.

56. With regard to inter-agency cooperation, the workshop also called for greater cooperation between UNHCR and OHCHR, both at headquarters level and in the field. Similarly, the workshop recommended that field-based humanitarian NGOs and human rights agencies should work more closely together, sharing ideas and information on a regular basis. One advantage of these arrangements would to be provide advocacy-oriented agencies with the field-level information they require to monitor the situation of internally displaced people and to hold States and non-State actors accountable for their actions.

XII. DATA COLLECTION AND EXCHANGE

57. The workshop regretted the poor quality and quantity of data available in relation to the internally displaced persons of Africa. Participants consequently welcomed the recent efforts which have been made to address this problem, including the publication of Masses in Flight and The Forsaken People by the Brookings Institution, the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey, and UNHCR's annual statistical overview, Refugees and Others of Concern to UNHCR.

58. Recognizing the important role which data collection and exchange can play in monitoring the situation of the internally displaced and the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the workshop expressed support for the establishment of inter-agency information networks and information-sharing mechanisms. Participants welcomed the decision of the United Nations's Inter-Agency Standing Committee to request the establishment of a global database on internally displaced persons, which is to be established in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council. The workshop also expressed the hope that regional and subregional organizations in Africa would establish their own focal points for the issue of internal displacement, and that these focal points would, in association with the global database project, play an increasingly active role in the collection and exchange of data.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Presentations: Ambassador Daniel Antonio
Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs
OAU

Francis M. Deng
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution and
Representative of the United Nations
Secretary-General on internally displaced persons

David Lambo
Regional Liaison Representative
UNHCR

2. INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW

This session provided an historical overview to internal displacement, with particular reference to Africa, and examined the response of the international community to the problem, including the issue of institutional arrangements and the development of a legal framework.

Presentation: Francis M. Deng

3. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

In 1998, the Guiding Principles were presented to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. This session reviewed their content, evaluated their impact and discussed the roles and responsibilities of States, regional organizations, United Nations agencies and NGOs in the application of the Principles.

Discussion leader: John Tesha
Senior Political Adviser
OAU

Presentation: Roberta Cohen
Co-Director
Project on Internal Displacement Brookings Institution

4. APPLICATION OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN AFRICA

The application of the Guiding Principles in Africa entails many challenges, including negotiating access, dealing with the issue of sovereignty, developing a knowledge of ethnic and identity issues, and working in areas controlled by insurgents and other non-State actors. This session focused on the scope of the problem in Africa and how best to deal with such challenges.

Discussion leader: Sylvester Awuye
Deputy Regional Liaison Representative UNHCR

Presentations: "Scope and Scale of Internal Displacement in Africa"

Jeff Drumtra
Senior Policy Analyst
United States Committee for Refugees

"The Issue of Sovereignty"

Chief Segun Olusola
Founder and President
African Refugees Foundation

"Working on Both Sides of Conflict Situations"

Abdul Mohammed
Senior Adviser for Africa
UNICEF

Zidane Meriboute
Head of Mission to the OAU
ICRC

Teklewoin Assefa
Executive Director
Relief Society of Tigray

5. INTEGRATING PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS

Addressing internal displacement requires providing protection as well as assistance to displaced populations, ensuring safety for relief workers, and promoting sustainable reintegration and developments. This session focused on best practices for integrating protection and human rights into relief and development operations in Africa and identified the pitfalls to avoid.

Discussion leader: Irene Khan
Head
Centre for Documentation and Research
UNHCR

Presentations: Luc Zandvliet
Country Director
Médecins Sans Frontières

Binaifer Nowrojee
Counsel
Human Rights Watch/Africa

Meriam Ghalmi
Human Rights Officer
OHCHR
Burundi

6. PROTECTING INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The vast majority of internally displaced persons are women and children, many of whom find themselves in situations of great danger and vulnerability. This session of the workshop asked what steps are being taken to promote greater protection for them and what strategies have proven to be most effective in that respect.

Discussion leader: Joyce Mends-Cole
Senior Regional Gender Adviser
UNDP

Presentations: Alain Pillet
Regional Director
Save the Children
Kenya

Rosalba Oywa
ACORD
Uganda

7. INVOLVING DISPLACED AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Guiding Principles represent an important advocacy tool as well as a means of empowerment for internally displaced populations. This session of the workshop examined the steps that humanitarian organizations and other actors might take to ensure that displaced and local communities are effectively involved in relief, development and reintegration activities.

Discussion leader: Canon Clement Janda
General Secretary
All Africa Conference of Churches

Presentation: Askale Binega
Delegate to the Great Lakes
Africa Humanitarian Action

8. ROLE OF REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Regional and subregional organizations in Africa have begun to play a role in situations of conflict and displacement. In particular, they have engaged in conflict prevention and resolution, monitoring conditions of displacement and the sponsoring of regional conferences. In the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone, moreover, a multinational force was dispatched that involved itself with the protection of civilians. This session explored the potential for regional and subregional organizations to play an expanded role with internally displaced persons, in particular with regard to the Guiding Principles.

Discussion leader: Mbaye Diouf
Director, Regional Cooperation and Integration Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Presentations: E.M. Ngung
Director, Bureau for Refugees, Displaced Persons and Humanitarian Affairs
OAU

Tadesse Ayalew
IGAD
(presenting statement by Dr. Kinfe Abraham, Director of Political and Humanitarian Affairs)

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the objectives of this workshop is to provide input on internal displacement to the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa, to take place in Khartoum in December 1998. This session developed the conclusions and recommendations to be submitted to the ministerial meeting and discussed the content of the workshop report.

Discussion leader and rapporteur: Jeff Crisp
Senior Research Officer
Policy Research Unit
UNHCR

10. CONCLUDING REMARKS

E.M. Ngung
Sylvester Awuye
Francis M. Deng

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ACORD - Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development	Rosalba Oywa Assistant Programme Coordinator Gulu, Uganda
Africa Humanitarian Action	Askale Binega Delegate, Great Lakes Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
African Refugees Foundation	Chief Segun Olusola Founder and President Lagos, Nigeria
All Africa Conference of Churches	Canon Clement Janda General Secretary Nairobi, Kenya
Bureau of the OAU Commission on Refugees	Ambassador Smail Chergui Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Addis Ababa, Sthiopia
	Mr. M. Elkarib Minister Plenipotentiary Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Mwenya Lwatula Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of the Republic of Zambia Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Ambassador Jean H. Mbea Mbea Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Soltane Chaibout Naim Diplomat Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Maliki Tahirou Counsellor Embassy of the Republic of Niger Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Samuel R. Zang Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Brookings Institution	Roberta Cohen Co-Director Project on Internal Displacement Washington D.C. United States of America
	Francis M. Deng Senior Fellow and Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on internally displaced persons Washington D.C. United States of America
Human Rights Watch/Africa	Binaifer Nowrojee Legal Counsel New York, United States of America
ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross	Ibrahima Dia Assistant Head of Mission to the OAU Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Daniel Helle Legal Adviser, Legal Division Geneva, Switzerland
	Zidane Meriboute Head of Mission to the OAU Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development	Tadesse Ayalew Training Coordinator Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Inter Africa Group	Atebia Kokeb K. Gebrewold Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Lissane Yohannes Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
IOM - International Organization for Migration	Mariano Bernardo IDP Information Technology System Specialist Nairobi, Kenya
	Marco T. Boasso-Sanchez Focal Point IDPs Programme Support Division Geneva, Switzerland
	Meera Sethi Representative Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Lutheran World Federation	Temesgen Amante Project Coordinator Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Médecins Sans Frontières/Holland (Netherlands)	Luc Zandvliet Country Director Khartoum, Sudan
Norwegian Refugee Council	Marc Vincent Coordinator Geneva, Switzerland
OAU - Organization of African Unity	Sam Ibok Director a.i., Political Department Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Mary Maboreke Chief, Women's Unit Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	E.M. Ngung Director, Bureau for Refugees, Displaced Persons and Humanitarian Affairs Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Yetunde Teriba Women's Affairs Officer, Women's Unit Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	John Tesha Senior Political Officer Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
OCHA - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Jean-Jacques Fresard Senior Advisor on IDPs New York, United States of America
	Bernard Harborne IDP Officer Khartoum, Sudan
	Teferra Shiawl-Kidanekal Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	Meriam Ghalmi Human Rights Officer Bujumbura, Burundi
Oxfam	Charlotte Langeveld Sudan Policy Liaison Officer Nairobi, Kenya

Relief Society of Tigray	Teklewoin Assefa Executive Director Mekelle, Ethiopia
Save the Children/United Kingdom	Alain Pillet Regional Director Nairobi, Kenya
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme	James Borton Coordinator Ethiopia Emergency Unit Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Joyce Mends-Cole Senior Regional Gender Adviser Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	Mbaye Diouf Director, Regional Cooperation and Integration Division Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund	Luka T. Monoja Regional Reproductive Health Adviser Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Miriam K. Were Director Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
UNHCR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Sylvester Awuye Deputy Regional Liaison Representative Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Sten Bronée Chief, Protection Training and Support Section Geneva, Switzerland
	Johan Cels Assistant Representative (Protection) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Jeff Crisp Senior Research Officer Policy Research Unit Geneva, Switzerland

	Irene Khan Head Centre for Documentation and Research Geneva, Switzerland
	David Lambo Regional Liaison Representative Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
UNICEF	Abdul Mohammed Senior Regional Adviser Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
United States Committee for Refugees	Jeff Drumtra Senior Africa Policy Analyst Washington D.C. United States of America
WFP - World Food Programme	Judith Lewis Representative Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Hong-Wen Yu Programme Officer Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Workshop secretariat	Joan Allison UNHCR Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Erin Mooney OHCHR Geneva, Switzerland
	Meskerem Sertse UNHCR Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	Kathrine Starup UNHCR Addis Ababa, Ethiopia